

Application No. 09/996,951

Remarks

Claims 21, 22 and 26-28 remain in this application. Claims 23-25 have been canceled. Claims 21 and 22 have been amended. Claims 27 and 28 have been added.

In an Office action dated June 10, 2003, claims 21-23 and 26 were rejected in view of the prior art reference to Bottom. On the other hand, claims 24 and 25 were identified as containing allowable subject matter, but were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

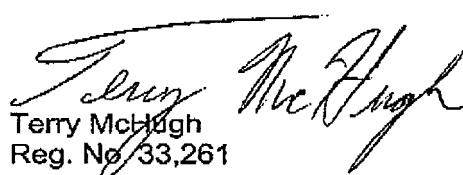
In response to the Office action, Applicants have amended independent claim 21 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 24 and its intervening claim 23. Dependent claim 22 has been amended, since the amendment to claim 21 provides antecedent basis for the terms "temperature" and "oxygen content." Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claim 21 is allowable over the prior art, as indicated in the Office action.

Added claim 27 is a combination of previously pending claims 21, 23, 24 and 25. Thus, the added claim includes the features of claim 25 (which was merely objected to) and its base and intervening claims. In view of the indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants submit that claim 27 and its dependent claim 28 are allowable over the cited prior art.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims in view of the amendments and remarks made herein. A notice of allowance is earnestly solicited. In the case that any issues regarding this application can be resolved expeditiously via a telephone conversation, Applicants invite the Examiner to call Terry McHugh at (650) 969-8458.

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Respectfully submitted,


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Date: August 8, 2003

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